

What Is Claimed Is:

SUB A1 1. A contents distribution method for distributing digitized contents to plural users, comprising the steps of: encrypting and distributing contents; decoding the encrypted contents and utilizing thereof by a user; and executing accounting to the user according to said utilized contents.

2. The contents distribution method according to Claim 1, wherein:

summary information showing a summary of said contents is attached to said encrypted contents.

3. The contents distribution method according to Claim 2, wherein:

said summary information is displayed only in case it is accompanied by decoding information for decoding encrypted contents corresponding to said summary information.

SUB A1 4. The contents distribution method according to Claim 1, wherein:

said decoding is executed by a decoding key generated based upon first decoding information attached to said encrypted contents and second decoding information which is provided to said user.

SUB A2 5. The contents distribution method according to Claim 1, wherein:

said contents mean a document displayed or printed in

a page unit; and

said accounting is executed for said page unit.

6. The contents distribution method according to Claim 1, wherein:

said distribution is executed by a broadcast.

SUBA3 7. A contents distribution system that distributes digitized contents to plural users, comprising:

a distribution device that distributes encrypted contents;

a user terminal that receives encrypted contents distributed by said distribution device and generates accounting information according to the utilization of said received encrypted contents; and

a central station that collects and totalizes accounting information generated by said user terminal.

8. The contents distribution system according to Claim 7, wherein:

said distribution device encrypts contents provided by a contents provider and generates encrypted contents; and

said distribution device attaches list information showing the contents of said encrypted contents and summary information showing the summary to said encrypted contents and distributes said encrypted contents.

9. The contents distribution system according to Claim 8, wherein:

said user terminal displays said list information and said summary information; and

said user terminal decodes only encrypted contents selected by a user based upon said displayed list information and summary information out of said encrypted contents received.

10. The contents distribution system according to Claim 8, wherein:

said user terminal displays only list information and summary information respectively corresponding to encrypted contents having decoding information out of said list information and said summary information.

Sub 61 11. The contents distribution system according to Claim 7, wherein:

said distribution device distributes said encrypted contents by a broadcast.

12. The contents distribution system according to Claim 7, wherein:

said user terminal comprises:

a data sink that receives encrypted contents distributed from said distribution device;

a data output part that stores encrypted contents received by said data sink, decodes said stored encrypted contents and generates accounting information according to the quantity of utilized said decoded contents; and

a printer that prints contents decoded by said data output part.

13. The contents distribution system according to Claim 12, wherein:

said quantity of utilized contents means the number of

pages included in contents printed by said printer.

14. The contents distribution system according to Claim 7, wherein:

said user terminal comprises:

a data sink that receives encrypted contents distributed from said distribution device; and

a display that stores encrypted contents received by said data sink, decodes and displays said encrypted contents stored and generates accounting information according to the number of pages included in said displayed contents.

15. The contents distribution system according to Claim 7, wherein:

said distribution device attaches first decoding information required for decoding said encrypted contents to said encrypted contents and distributes them; and

said user terminal is provided with second decoding information proper to a user who uses said user terminal and decodes said encrypted contents based upon said first decoding information and said second decoding information.